GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2324
ANSWERED ON:13.03.2001
DROUGHT PRONE AREAS PROGRAMME
PRABHUNATH SINGH;RASA SINGH RAWAT;SANAT KUMAR MANDAL

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the drought conditions and ecological conditions have not shown any perceptible improvement even after implementing the drought prone area programme for two decades;

(b) if so. The reasons thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to reduce the drought prone areas;

(d) whether the Government have conducted any fresh survey of drought prone areas in the country;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government propose to consider a comprehensive special package for these areas to meet the situation; and
(g) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (Prof. RITA VERMA)

(a) & (b) The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) are special area development programmes being implemented since 1973-74 and 1997-78 respectively. These programmes could not neutralize the adverse impact of the overall process of degradation inspite of their implementation for a long time. Of the many factors responsible for the above situation, the most important factor is that under both the programmes, a wide range of activities not necessarily related to the core objectives were taken up in the past by spreading them thinly over widely dispersed areas. This tended to defuse focus on efforts to be made for achieving the core objectives of the programmes. Attempts at mitigating the sufferings of the people were also aimed at the provision of ad-hoc relief through income generating activities funded from the area development programmes without integrating such works with programmes for land and water conservation.

(c)(d)&(e) In order to make suitable corrections in the implementation of the programmes and bring about perceptible impact in the programme areas, the Government had set up a Technical Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. C.H.Hanumantha Rao, former Member, Planning Commission which reviewed the contents, methodology, funding pattern and institutional mechanism in the implementation of the programmes and recommended suitable corrective measures. The Committee had also recommended a scientific criteria for identification of drought prone and desert areas in the country. According to this criteria, DPAP now covers 961 blocks in 180 districts of 16 States and DDP covers 232 blocks in 40 districts of 7 States.

(f) & (g) On the basis of the recommendations of the Technical Committee headed by Prof. C.H.Hanumantha Rao, DPAP and DDP are now being implemented on integrated watershed development basis as per the Guidelines for Wateshed Development w.e.f. 1.4.1995. These Guidelines provide comprehensive measures for development of the natural resource base of the programme areas. The programmes are also made peoples programme by delegating responsibility of planning, implementation and management of the watershed development projects to the watershed communities with technical and financial support from the Government and non-governmental organisations.